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ABSTRACT

As entitlements for students, "Average Daily Attendance" funding (ADA), Title I and Pell Grants can provide a stable funding base to support college bridge programs targeted to at-risk students and dropouts. In most states, school districts can re-enroll out-of-school students and draw additional ADA money from the state. College bridge programs draw from the current base of funding for traditional school activities, and principals may oppose use for purposes outside schools, but the programs may also increase retention of at-risk students and thus ultimately school enrollment and revenue base. Pell Grants can be linked to ADA-funded college bridge programs and easily accessed by the economically disadvantaged, but they are limited to 16 successful quarters of postsecondary education. Development of college preparation initiatives is directly in line with Title I program goals, but funding is often used to support designated school staff making reallocation difficult. Research suggests a significant opportunity for states to move forward with a college/bridge initiative for at-risk and out-of-school youth. State experience in Minnesota, Utah, Washington, and Massachusetts, suggests key components of a program model that: links community colleges and high schools; provides on-campus experience; provides college credit; includes direct transition to college degree programs; and provides basic skills and ongoing support.(YLB)

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Opportunities for Expanding College Bridge Programs for Out of School Youth

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Context/Overview

Post-secondary education is increasingly the key to economic self-sufficiency in today's economy

- A majority of jobs require some form of post-secondary education and training.
- A post-secondary education has a significant impact on earnings:
  - A four-year degree makes a 53% difference for high school graduates and a 272% difference for individuals with no high school diploma.
  - A two-year degree adds 34% for a high school graduate and 79% for high school dropouts.
- Schools have recognized the importance of making this connection for high-achieving students.
- Program experience also suggests that making this connectionfor at risk students may increase educational attainment and stem dropout rates. Programs in Washington State, Oregon, Massachusetts, and Kansas City appear to show that post-secondary bridge programs targeted to at-risk students and dropouts can encourage re-enrollment, improved educational outcomes, and continuing college attendance.

African American, Latino, and disadvantaged students have more limited access to post-secondary education

- 47% of African-American and 53% of Latino graduates in 1992 were academically qualified for college, compared to 68% of whites.
- 53% of students from families with incomes of less than $25,000 were qualified for college compared to 86% for students from families making more than $75,000.

Current outreach and college preparation programs are effective but do not address the needs of at-risk and disadvantaged students

- Our review of college preparation programs has identified three key policy and programmatic issues:
  - Scale of current programs is small.
  - Programs tend to target likely college goers.
  - Current high school tracking structure creates barriers for current underrepresented students.

There are potential resources now to fund expanded post-secondary bridge programs for at-risk and out-of-school youth

- Existing state education dollars (ADA) offer a base for creating expanded bridge programs for in-and out-of-school youth.
- Pell, Title I, and other available untapped or underutilized resources could also be used to support these programs.

States have the potential to expand post-secondary bridge programs now

- There is an existing policy and program framework for post-secondary bridge programs in a number of states.
- Using current funding to expand existing program models offers the potential to extend these programs to reach a significant number of at-risk and out-of-school youth.
- The major barriers in most states are lack of attention and political will.
- A minority of states may also have regulatory barriers.

Funding Potential

ADA Funding

There are significant resources that can support expanded bridge programs for currently under-represented students. By far the largest single resource is "Per Pupil" or "Average Daily Attendance" funding (ADA) – federal, state, and local aid to schools based on student enrollment.

- The total pool of ADA funding is more than $275 billion.
- Communities now spend $ 5,000 per student per year or more to finance public education.
- These dollars provide a base for school districts to contract with community and four-year colleges to establish college bridge programs.
- A preliminary study conducted by the Workforce Strategy Center of 14 states shows that school districts in all states contacted can subcontract with an outside provider such as a community college for educational services.
- Using these funds for college bridge programs may prove to be a financial advantage for school districts as experience suggests (see below) that college bridge programs may encourage students to keep enrolled rather than drop out thus maintaining the district's funding pool.
- Washington State, Minnesota, and Utah among other states have used ADA to support dual enrollment programs. The Washington State program served 12,355 students in 1998-1999, over 10% of the state's juniors and seniors.

ADA can also support college bridge programs for out-of-school students. In most states, school districts can re-enroll out-of-school students, thus drawing down additional ADA money from the state. These previously untapped resources, as much as $2,500 to $7,500 per student per year, can then be used to support college bridge programs.

- The WSC survey of 14 states shows that ten of fourteen states agreed they could re-enroll out-of-school youth while four were unsure.
- Some states such as Washington, Minnesota, Texas, Missouri, and Oregon and other states have used this provision to support substantial alternative programs including college bridge programs for previously out-of-school students.
- Washington State is currently using these resources to develop a large-scale college bridge for out-of-school youth that can ultimately serve as the basis for a

full-scale system. This system would build on the college bridge strategy as a means to re-engage out-of-school youth in continuing education (see PATHNET example below).

- Portland, OR has developed an aggressive policy towards out-of-school students, re-enrolling an additional 3,000 students who had previously dropped out, generating an additional $12 million in ADA for the district. A substantial portion of this funding is used to support a college bridge program for out-of-school youth at the local community college.

Advantages in terms of use of ADA

- ADA is the largest source of funding available to local school districts to finance education activities.
- ADA is among the most flexible resource for development of college bridge programs with decisions as to its use resting with the school board and local superintendent.
- District focus on re-enrolling out-of-school youth in education through alternatives like college bridge program can substantially increase the revenue base for school districts as the Portland example shows.
- Use of ADA-funding to re-engage out-of-school youth through alternative programs can reduce the dropout rate without adversely impacting traditional schools.

Challenges

- Use of ADA to support college bridge programs for in-school students draws from the current base of funding to support traditional school activities. Use of this funding for any purpose outside schools will likely draw opposition from principals. It may be, however, that development of ADA-funded alternatives will increase retention of at-risk students and thus ultimately school enrollment and revenue base.

ADA SURVEY RESPONSE

State	1) Is state aid determined by a per-pupil formula?	2) Can school districts in your state contract with an outside provider for educational services?	3) Can school districts in your state re-enroll out of school students and use per pupil funding to contract with an outside provider of educational services?	4) Can your State Department of Education fund alternative education programs?	5) Does your state provide additional or supplemental funds to low-income districts?	6) Can these supplemental funds be used for course work at community colleges or other alternative sites?
CT	Yes	Yes	Yes, provided they are not adults. Funding not based on a per-pupil formula	Only through competitive grants	Yes	Yes
CO	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (legislative process)	No	No
KY	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (legislative process)	No	No
MA	Yes (partly)	Yes	Yes (rarely occurs)	Yes	Not Answered	Not Answered
ME	Yes (64% based on per-pupil formula)	Yes (for some services)	No Answer	Yes	No	No
MN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unclear, certain alternative programs (charter schools, dual enrollment, drop-out prevention) mandated by	Yes	Yes

				legislation		
MO	No	Yes (rarely occurs)	Yes	Yes (managed by districts)	Yes (managed by district)	Yes (managed by district)
ND	No	Yes	No Answer	Yes	Yes	Not Answered
NE	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
OR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (managed by district	Yes	Yes
RI	Yes ($3.4M)	Yes	Respondent did not know	None	No	No
TX	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (legislative process)	No	No
VT	Yes	Yes	No Answer	No	Yes	Yes
WA	Yes (partly)	Yes	Answered Incorrectly	Yes	Yes	Yes

Pell Grants

A second resource is post-secondary funding. Federal Pell grants provide up to $3,100 per student per year (1999-2000) to support post-secondary training and education. Because most programs targeted to at-risk and out-of-school youth do not now include a post-secondary component, Pell grants are often not seen as a programmatic resource for secondary-level students. However, Pell grant dollars can be linked to ADA-funded college bridge or dual enrollment programs to create a continuing college pathway. A number of communities around the country, including Seattle, Portland, and Baltimore, are now seeking to use these dollars to prepare at-risk and out-of-school youth for post-secondary education; connect them to college; and sustain them once there.

Advantages

- As the federal government's largest education program, Pell grants offer a substantial funding base, which, when combined with ADA dollars, can support large-scale bridge programs.
- As an entitlement to the economically disadvantaged, Pell grants are a broad-based resource that can be easily accessed by much of the economically disadvantaged population.

Challenge

- Pell grants are limited to 16 successful quarters of post-secondary education. These resources need to be expended carefully.

Title I

Title I is the nation's largest federally funded education program at $7.4 billion (FY 98). These dollars, allocated based on economic and educational disadvantage, are intended to promote higher educational achievement among at-risk students. Title I legislation, reforming the long-time program, has moved the focus away from individual remediation to school-wide programs designed to provide overall academic enrichment. The majority of Title I funding is directed at elementary schools; however a still significant funding pool is used for middle and high school programs.

The provision for school-wide strategies offers a good base for adapting college preparation or bridge strategies as an overall framework for Title I-funded programming. Title I funds can also be accessed by alternative programs based on disadvantaged enrollment. One such program in Kansas City, MO has employed these resources to support a college bridge program for re-enrolled out-of-school youth using Title I.

Advantages

- Development of college preparation initiatives is directly in line with the goals of the reformed Title I programs.
- College preparation presents an opportunity to engage principals, students, and parents in a compelling school-wide vision.

Challenges

- Title I funding is often used to support designated school staff making it difficult to re-allocate easily to other purposes.

Bridge Program Examples

Dual or concurrent enrollment refers to a range of state and institutional policies governing the enrollment of high school students in post-secondary classes. While dual enrollment has existed on campuses for years formal state policy in this area is relatively new. Beginning in 1985 with Minnesota's Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program, numerous states began encouraging secondary school students to take college classes for credit. Currently, at least 14 states have formal dual enrollment policies that set rules for student participation and cross-sector articulation. Many other states offer more informal programs.

While dual enrollment has historically been used by small group of academically high performing children, the model may be more broadly applicable to a wider range of students. Dual enrollment can provide more rigorous curricular opportunities to all youth, including those at-risk, than student's current high school. Dual enrollment can also provide a more seamless transition for students from secondary school to college. Dual enrollment thus offers policy makers a way to bridge the K-16 divide, and provide more equitable access to curricular content, without having to transform schools or the policy system.

The contents of dual enrollment policies vary greatly from state to state. In a 1997 study, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) identified 11 states – Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin – with "comprehensive" programs of dual enrollment. A comprehensive program, according to ECS, is one that:

- Offers post-secondary courses at minimal or no cost to students
- Allows credit to be applied to both high schools and colleges
- Has few restrictions on the amount of credit students can take

Based on these criteria, our review has added Texas and Oregon to the list of comprehensive state programs.

Even states with comprehensive programs vary considerably in their policy features, programmatic offerings, and evidence of success. Below are profiles of three such states, Minnesota, Utah, and Washington.

Minnesota Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program

Minnesota's Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program (PSEOP) allows 11th and 12th grade students to take postsecondary classes at state expense. All juniors and seniors are eligible to participate in the program, provided they can meet the entrance requirements of the postsecondary institution they wish to attend. Though the state pays program costs, Districts lose all or part of the ADA budget for participating students.

- In the 1994-1995 school year, 87 postsecondary campuses (two-year, four-year, public, private) enrolled 6,671 students – approximately 6% of Minnesota public school juniors and seniors.
- 283 school districts (85%) had students participate in PSEOP in that same year.
- Students who successfully complete classes receive secondary school credit and may apply for college credit after graduation.
- In 1996, the Minnesota State audit found that program participants received higher grades that regular admitted students at the four-year colleges, but lower grades at the technical (2-year) colleges.
- In terms of fiscal impact, PSEOP cost an additional $4.5 million in state and local expenditures, while saving students and parents around $9.6 million.
- Those districts whose pupils participated in the program saw a median reduction in per pupil education aid of over $14,000.

Utah Concurrent Enrollment Program

The Utah Concurrent Enrollment Program (CEP) enables high school seniors to take courses for college credit. CEP is intended as a means to "accelerate" the education of certain students, and reduce their time to degree. Students who complete an associate's degree in high school are eligible for a 75% scholarship for the last two years of college.

Utah allocates $1,500 per student (FTE) to school districts to pay for concurrent enrollment. Districts then negotiate contracts with individual postsecondary institutions. For classes taught on high school campuses, the schools generally keep 2/3 with the colleges receiving 1/3. When classes are taught on college campuses, these percentages are reversed. Since CEP students remain enrolled in high school, districts can count them as part of the per pupil funding formula.

- Selection is competitive based on a B average or an ACT score of 22.
- In 1997-98, 18,033 students participated in CEP, earning on average around 9 credit hours.
- All nine public higher education institutions in Utah participate in the program.
- The state pays for up to 45 quarter hours (30 semester) of college credit, credit than can also be counted towards high school graduation.

Washington State Running Start

Running Start enables 11th and 12th grade students to take college-level courses at the state's two and some four-year colleges. Since its inception in 1990, the program has grown enormously in popularity and visibility. Running Start served 12,355 students in 1998-1999, over 10% of the state's juniors and seniors.

Though similar to programs in Minnesota, Utah, and elsewhere, Running Start is framed less restrictively than in many states, one factor that contributes to its popularity. The program is targeted to "qualified students who may perform better in a college setting than in a traditional high school."

- Running Start is funded from state ADA dollars. School districts keep 7% of the per pupil budget to pay for student counseling and administrative overhead.
- In addition to 90% of the ADA, some colleges also receive college-level per pupil funding.
- Evaluation of Running Start shows that the GPA of program participants at two-year colleges was 3.12, slightly higher than the average GPA of regular two-year students (2.99).
- At the University of Washington, Running Start transfer students have a four-year graduation rate and GPA slightly higher than regularly entering freshman.

Advantages of Dual Enrollment

- In the states where it is offered, dual enrollment is a significant and growing educational alternative that is popular among parents and students.
- Dual enrollment offers a promising approach to increase college access and degree completion.
- Unlike college preparation programs, dual enrollment generally draws on a stable source of funding (state ADA or FTE).
- Dual enrollment also has the potential to pay all or part of its costs by more efficiently using state education dollars.

Challenges

- Most state dual enrollment programs target upper grade (11^{th} and 12^{th}) students that are performing well in school, and are planning on going to college anyway. As in Utah, many other states restrict students' access to these program based on grades, SAT, ACT or placement test scores, or some combination of these. Texas and some other states are also proposing to tie dual enrollment eligibility to performance on state high school exit examinations. At least one state – Wisconsin – explicitly prevents at-risk students from participating in its Youth Options Program.
- There is a lack of incentives for high schools. In nearly all the states we surveyed, colleges and universities were more enthusiastic about dual enrollment than their counterparts in secondary schools. This fact should surprise no one – in most cases dual enrollment represents a fiscal drain on schools and districts. As well, enrollment decreases often mean fewer Advanced Placement (AP) offerings for the remaining students.
- The popularity and visibility of Running Start is somewhat of an anomaly, as in most states dual enrollment is a very low profile policy issue. Our review of state programs uncovered no states where dual enrollment serves more than 10% of the high school population.
- The majority of state dual enrollment programs have not been rigorously evaluated. Those that have – like Running Start and the Minnesota and Utah

programs – focus on issues like time to degree and cost-efficiency. No existing evaluations satisfactorily address student performance.

Innovative Models

Some models now being developed seek to extend the advantage of the bridge program approach to a broader population on at risk in- and out-of-school youth.

Massachusetts Diploma Plus

Diploma Plus uses components of dual enrollment and competency-based learning to provide alternative pathways to higher education for at-risk youth. Based on the principle that "most youth can meet high academic standards and prepare for post-secondary options, even those with tremendous odds against them (About DP, 2000: 1)", the program provides college bridge activities for over 400 in school and out of school students.

The program has three stages:

- Stage 1. Basic instruction in reading, math, writing and critical thinking.
- Stage 2, the "Plus" Year. Students participate in a small group (10-15) senior seminar led by a program mentor at one of the nine Diploma Plus sites -- traditional schools, a school-within a school, a charter school and a community-based satellite agency. Plus Year students also take one or more courses at a local community college.
- Stage 3. Students take additional classes towards their associate's degree.

Cost

Administrative and program costs for Diploma Plus are paid for by foundations and the state School to Work office. Funds for first stage learning activities are paid directly by the Massachusetts Department of Education to the nine sites. Generally, this money is not state per pupil funding, but instead comes out of the Adult Basic Education budget. Those sites that are traditional or charter schools do receive ADA allocations. Both the senior seminar and the community college classes are funded with dual enrollment dollars.

Target group

Initial data suggests that Diploma Plus serves a very different population than most dual enrollment programs. Of the 1998-1999 students, 53 percent come from families with a yearly income of less than $15,000. 75% of the enrollees are minorities. A complete evaluation of the program is currently being conducted by Jobs for the Future (JFF). Program sites do report that over 60% of the 1999 graduates are continuing their postsecondary education.

Washington State Puget Sound Pathways Network (PATHNET)

Puget Sound PATHNET is a community college-run bridge program targeted to out-of-school youth. The program is operated by six Seattle area community colleges and currently serves about 500-600 students with plans to expand to 4,000.

The initiative is designed in two phases:

Phase I lasts 10-12 weeks and consists of:

- Assessment;
- Introduction to career and education opportunities;
- Career planning;
- Basic skills preparation including literacy, computer, and math skills. The skills component is based on developmental courses now offered at the community colleges;
- Paid employment;
- Case management;
- Day care and other supportive services.

The first phase includes 50% classroom time and 50% paid work and is based at neighborhood organizations and at community colleges. Participants have the opportunity to visit all the sponsoring community colleges to aid in educational choice.

Phase II is conducted at participating community colleges where students enter specific education and training programs in the three career areas: Information technology, diversified manufacturing and health (as well as other opportunities). The second phase includes case management, peer counseling, employment and placement services, and ongoing connection to training and education opportunities at the community colleges.

Funding

The primary source of funding for PATHNET is state education dollars gained through re-enrolling out-of-school students in the school district. Districts, drawing down additional ADA based on expanded enrollment ($4,500 per student per year), then transfer the funding to community colleges to support program operations. Unlike the ADA-financed programs above for in-school students, this program, focused on out-of-school students, offers financial incentives to all involved:

- Receiving school districts draw down additional state educational dollars for students re-enrolled and keep 7-10% of this funding for administrative costs.
- Community colleges receive the bulk of the ADA funding to finance programs and also are able to draw down additional FTE funding from the community college system.
- Students themselves receive continuing funding support up to the age of 21 (provided they do not have a high school diploma) that can support community college education leading to an associate degree.

Target group

The PATHNET program targets out-of-school, largely disadvantaged students with no economic or academic threshold requirements.

The prototype for PATHNET, the Shoreline Community College Career Education Opportunity Program (CEO) has shown high retention rates among enrolled out-of-school students and significant achievement toward attainment of associate degrees.

Advantages

- Both Diploma Plus and PATHNET reach a broader population than the traditional programs described above, with outreach to economically disadvantaged and at-risk students.
- Program experience of these programs suggests that a community college focus may be more successful in promoting education attainment among at-risk students than traditional remedial programs.
- PATHNET shows that serving out-of-school students offers a significant and extended funding base through re-directed resources.
- PATHNET shows that programs directed at or incorporating out-of-school youth can access a large, continuing, and secure funding base that, as an entitlement, will expand with each individual program enrollment.
- PATHNET suggests that serving out-of-school students in college bridge programs can reduce dropout rates for school districts while at the same time providing necessary remediation for college.

Challenges

- Diploma Plus as organized does not have a stable funding base.
- Structuring programs to serve an out-of-school population presents organizational challenges including the need to develop relationships among community colleges, schools, community based organizations, and government.

Opportunity

Our research suggests that there is a significant opportunity for states to move forward with a college/bridge initiative for at-risk and out-of-school youth based on the following key components.

Model

State experience in Minnesota, Utah, Washington, and Massachusetts suggests development of a program model that:

- Links community colleges and high schools
- Provides on-campus experience
- Provides college credit
- Includes direct transition to college degree programs
- Provides basic skills and ongoing support

Target Group

The traditional dual enrollment model has been targeted to higher achieving in-school youth who meet stated grade and achievement requirements. As described above, the experience of the PATHNET and Diploma Plus programs show that the same strategy can encourage at-risk and out-of-school youth to remain in programs and can improve education achievement in this population. States should view college bridge programs as a broad educational achievement strategy that can be an integral part of the educational experience of all students.

Funding

ADA and Pell Grants, as entitlements for students provide a stable funding base to support college bridge programs. As noted above, there are real incentives for schools and colleges to collaborate on programs for out-of-school students which will access a new and currently untapped funding base.

The incentives for accessing this funding source for in-school students are less compelling. In nearly all the states we surveyed, colleges and universities were more enthusiastic about dual enrollment for in-school students that their counterparts in secondary schools. This fact should surprise no one – in most cases dual enrollment represents a fiscal drain on schools and districts. As well, enrollment decreases often mean fewer Advanced Placement (AP) offerings for the remaining students.

Policy makers need to address the incentives issue head-on. One option is to do what Washington is proposing, expand dual enrollment courses in high schools. Schools will then keep per pupil dollars and retain a pool of college-level classes. A second option is to encourage secondary schools to become more accountable for student transitions to college. While states have moved slowly in this area (remediation, feedback systems), high schools currently have few tangible incentives to invest in student success in college.

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